



SAF board left to right: Eugene Tashima, Len Shemin, Richard Lowe, Stefan Laeng-Gilliatt, Sara Gordon.
absent: Lee Klinger Lesser (photo by: Penny Smith)

President's Message

Over the last two to three years the SAF Board has been focusing diligently on the best ways to support the future of Sensory Awareness. It is clear there are quite a few challenges facing us. Our members are spread out all over the world, many of the leaders Charlotte Selver approved to offer classes and workshops are struggling financially to do so, there are many other practices which seemingly compete with Sensory Awareness for potential students, and the work itself is not well known by the public.

Even more importantly, without the charisma and guidance of Charlotte who was so central to our identity as a practice, our existence as a foundation and a key to our fund raising ability, how do we hold together and grow together as we explore productive ways to develop this valuable legacy she has left us?

To help us in our efforts, the Board hired skilled facilitator Lisa Goetell to lead it through a formal strategic planning process to guide it in assessing its strengths and weaknesses while helping it to better redefine and clarify its goals. As a result of this completed process the Board is now refocused and reenergized in its efforts to help Sensory Awareness become a more widely accessible and vital practice in the world. I want to share with you a brief overview of the Foundation's identified major goals for the near future:

1- To support approved Sensory Awareness leaders by helping them develop greater community and communication amongst themselves; by encouraging them in their efforts to clarify how new leaders will become approved; and by supporting them in their efforts to promote their professional work as leaders.

2 - To make Sensory Awareness more accessible to the public through sponsoring approved leaders in offering regional workshops, improving our website, continuing publications about the work, developing and distributing recordings and videos of Charlotte, and through continuing to sponsor ongoing yearly conferences.

3 - To record and distribute CDs and videos of approved leaders.

4 - To forge connections and alliances with affinity groups and other institutions such as universities, research programs, mindfulness and somatic studies based organizations, and community outreach programs.

5 - To ensure the sustainability of the Foundation for years to come through strategic fund raising efforts and sound financial practices.

Please note that our next yearly conference is scheduled for May, at Mt. Madonna Center near Watsonville, California. As an experiment we are holding the conference this time in the Spring vs. the Fall. We believe such conferences are vital in helping promoting public awareness and support of this work while building community. Such conferences also provide a way to bring many Sensory Awareness leaders together in a residential setting to meet together and dialogue about their work and the future of Sensory Awareness. We very much hope you can attend. More information on the conference will be posted on our soon to be redesigned web site and in our future mailings.

Please also note that tax deductible donations can be made directly to the SAF earmarked for Stefan Laeng-Gilliatt's important Charlotte Selver Oral History and Book Project. This new project will compile for the first time a detailed biography of Charlotte's life, and beyond that an oral history of many of those who have been personally touched by her and her work. We expect this to become a very valuable source book on Sensory Awareness. You should know that any such donations will go entirely to the project and do not support the SAF itself.

An important new book on Sensory Awareness and creative expression has just been published by long time Sensory Awareness leader and artist Connie Smith Siegel. It has taken Connie many years of hard work to prepare this book for publication, but

President's Message (Continued)

it is finally done and promises to be a ground breaking book with many practical applications for artists and those interested in the creative process. (See Connie's article on page 5)

The SAF Board believes we are presently at an exciting and important stage in our development and we ask you to join us in our efforts to promote this important practice. If you are not now a SAF member please consider becoming one. As a member you will not only help support our many important projects including our website and newsletter, you will also receive discounts at future SAF conferences and sponsored workshops, plus discounts on books, publications, and CDs. This year all members will also receive a surprise free gift. More importantly your membership adds to the Sensory Awareness community. We are a small community, in many ways like a family, and it is through our very connection, energy and honoring of this work that we draw our true strength and help the work live on.

Best wishes,

Richard Lowe

Reflections:

"Exploring breathing really needs to be a practice, but a practice which is absolutely new each time, not a repetition of old ways, but a finding out what is going on in the condition and activity in which you happen to be at a particular moment. No moment can be compared with another; in each there is something new to discover.... It is one of the most wonderful, most gratifying practices in which you can engage, because as you are finding out about breathing through experiencing it, you will become quieter and quieter, freer and freer, healthier and healthier, and more and more alive."

-- Charlotte Selver, Reclaiming Vitality and Presence

"As old as I am, all these moments of a new reality, of a new experiencing, make everything so alive and full. I feel how it affects me when I'm only in my head, with my thoughts, and when I really feel in my tissues, in my nerves, in my bones. When I am really sensitive from moment to moment I live a completely different life."

-- Charlotte Selver, Reclaiming Vitality and Presence

"The saying "Buddha is in everyone" can be understood as referring not to any special divinity, but to the potential of full consciousness in every organism according to its nature. This would restore to the organs of consciousness, our senses, the dignity which is due them."

-- Charles V.W. Brooks, Reclaiming Vitality and Presence

"In the years since biofeedback was invented, researchers like myself have asked why these external devices are necessary. Why must people look to biofeedback machines for feedback rather to internal cues? In other words, can we train ourselves to become mindful of processes within our own bodies?"

--Ellen Langer, Mindfulness

"It's actually a tremendous act of humility just to listen, to sense, to receive. It's a totally simple presence—natural and rare. To perceive that you are perceiving, aware of yourself seated on a chair, seeing and hearing and feeling together – that is the original meaning of the expression common sense."

-- Peter Kingsley, author of Reality, Interview in Parabola Magazine, Spring 2006

"Charlotte Selver's groundbreaking work with "sensory awareness" stands as one of the great developments in the human potential movement. Her work has influenced a couple of generations of somatic and existential therapists".



Charlotte and Charles during the construction of their home in Muir Beach, 1976 (Photo by Alan Barbour)

SAF Newsletter

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